



McLean County Needs You!

The CASA program is a volunteer opportunity like no other. Last year, 68,842 volunteers across the nation advocated for 240,894 children—yet that was just half of the children in the child welfare system at any given time.

First and foremost, we need dedicated, committed men and women who care about children and are willing to confidently stand up for them and make a difference in their lives.

Ideally, we would like you to make an 18 month commitment, but if your time doesn't allow, there are other ways to get involved.

Diversity Outreach

Volunteers are placed with a child based on that child's individual needs. Often these children are more comfortable with, and trusting of, advocates who best understand their cultural needs and who can connect with a child on their level.

We are committed to diversity and have a special need for more men and minorities to stand up and be counted as everyday heroes and role models.

2009 Statistics

Abused and neglected
children in McLean County: **502**
Children advocated for by CASA
volunteers: **159**



Volunteer. Become the voice of a child in need.



**Learn more about becoming a
CASA volunteer.**

**Decide to join our family of volunteers,
everyday people who are committed to
improving children's lives.**

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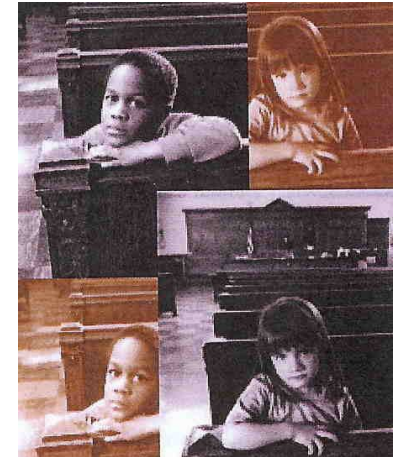
McLean County Child
Protection Network



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**CASA OF MCLEAN COUNTY
SPEAK UP FOR A CHILD**



Making a Lifelong Difference for a Child

This year alone, over half a million abused and neglected children will navigate the overburdened child welfare system. Through no fault of their own, they are currently unable to live safely at home.

~~Forgotten~~ Found

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteers

- Are concerned community members from a variety of backgrounds—a stay at home mom or dad, retiree, teacher, small business owner, corporate executive—anyone interested in serving our community's children;
- Are caring everyday people trained to act as powerful advocates and represent the child's voice in court in child abuse and neglect cases;
- Are appointed by judges to independently investigate, evaluate, and report on the progress of their foster child's case;
- Champion the best interests of abused and neglected children while in the court system and give them a chance to thrive;
- Are first-hand experts on the individual needs of the children they advocate for;
- Make sure the child does not get lost in the overburdened legal and social service system or languish in an inappropriate foster home;
- Offer stability and consistency to a child who may experience many caseworkers or foster care placements.



~~Neglected~~ Nurtured

What does having a CASA mean to an abused child?

Imagine what it would be like to lose your parents, not because of something you did, but because they can't—or won't—take care of you. Now, into your life come **dozens of strangers**: police officers, foster parents, social workers, judges, lawyers, and more.

Having a CASA volunteer means having by your side a trained and committed adult who has been appointed by a judge to watch over and advocate for your best interests in all areas of your life.

It can make the difference between homelessness and a safe home, between dropping out and completing school, between unemployment and success, between jails and becoming a productive member of society.

CASA volunteers' positive impact has been hailed by many judges and documented in several studies. CASA has been formally recognized as an outstanding advocacy and prevention program by the United States Department of Justice.

"A CASA is a dedicated volunteer who has unique talents and experiences to draw from in order to advocate on behalf of a neglected or abused child. Juvenile Court judges heavily rely on the CASA volunteer's report and perspective to help them reach a decision that is in the best interest of a child. They know that a CASA volunteer has spent many hours evaluating that child's needs by speaking to his parents, foster parents, teachers, counselors, siblings and other important people in his life. No one else involved in this child's case has the time to do this. That is why a CASA volunteer is so important."

Elizabeth A. Robb, Chief Judge, 11th Judicial Circuit

~~Abandoned~~ Adopted

What CASA Volunteers Are Saying

"Being a CASA can make a difference in the life of a child. Sometimes we are the only 'constant' in the child's life. Building that relationship and trust is so important. A very rewarding experience and one I hope to be involved in for a very long time!"

A. Sieg

"As a CASA, I have seen the commitment, discipline, and professionalism of those that champion on behalf of children every day through the Children's Foundation, DCFS, Assistant State's Attorney, Gal, etc. It makes me be committed to advocate on behalf of these children who need a voice for a safe, permanent, and loving home."

P. McBroom

"CASA is an unusual opportunity. There are other volunteer opportunities that are more fun, but I can't think of one that is more important to the children of McLean County. I feel the CASA Program staff genuinely appreciates my work. They express it often."

N. Miller

"We live in a community that is blessed in so many ways. Unfortunately, children in the child welfare system have lived a life of abuse and neglect; a life unimaginable to many. Being CASAs provides a way to strengthen our community by advocating for children to receive fundamental childhood needs and to ensure a brighter future. We help ensure the needs of a child are paramount."

R. and C. Graning